

**Statement of
Chairman Henry J. Hyde
Before the
Committee on International Relations
November 9, 2005**

Markup of H. Res. 505

Today the Committee will consider a resolution of inquiry. Mr. Kucinich of Ohio introduced H. RES. 505, requesting the President and directing the Secretary of State to transmit all documents from 2003 pertaining to the task force organized by Andrew Card, consisting of Karl Rove, Karen Hughes, Mary Matalin, Nicholas E. Calio, James R. Wilkinson, Condoleezza Rice, Stephen Hadley and I. Lewis Libby, known as the White House Iraq Group.

This committee has recently reported eight Resolutions of Inquiry, including resolutions similar to the resolution before us today. H. RES. 505, our ninth Resolution of Inquiry, seeks documents from the White House Iraq Group. Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card formed the White House Iraq Group in August 2002 to set strategy for each stage of the confrontation with Baghdad.

This request for White House documents comes on the heels, and in the midst, of numerous and extensive investigations into prewar intelligence on Iraq. Please bear with me as I summarize a sample of these investigations.

The two congressional Select Committees on Intelligence, the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (known as the Silberman-Robb Commission), the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, and the British Hutton Inquiry all reviewed - in detail - prewar intelligence on Iraq. None found any evidence of Administration officials attempting to coerce, influence or pressure intelligence analysts.

The Senate and House Permanent Select Committees on Intelligence reviewed and continue to review prewar intelligence on Iraq. Both committees, while finding failures in our intelligence assessments and methods, found no evidence that the Administration "fixed" intelligence to justify its policies. For instance, Conclusion number 83 in the Senate Intelligence Committee report entitled, "U.S. Intelligence Community's Prewar Intelligence Assessments on Iraq," states: "The Committee did not find any evidence that Administration officials attempted to coerce, influence or pressure analysts to change their judgments related to Iraq's weapons of mass destructions capabilities." This conclusion, as is true of the entire report, was approved by a unanimous, bipartisan vote by the Senate Committee.

The Senate's report, which runs over 500 pages, is the product of over 12 months of Committee review of more than 45,000 pages of intelligence documents spanning a decade and consisting of interviews of over 200 individuals, including White House staff, and documents

from four committee hearings. The scope of the Senate Intelligence Committee's inquiry into prewar assessments regarding Iraq is without precedent in the Committee.

Senator Roberts' conclusion on the issue of intelligence manipulation is worth repeating: "In the end, what the President used to make the extremely difficult decision to go to war was what he got from the Intelligence Community, and not what he or Administration officials tried to make it."

The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence reviewed U.S. intelligence regarding the number or existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, including the issues of bias, dissenting views and how intelligence was disseminated, and the linkages between Iraq and terrorist organizations. Again, no evidence of "fixing" intelligence surfaced.

The Silberman-Robb Commission is seen as producing the definitive report on the issue of prewar intelligence on Iraq. This was a blue ribbon, bipartisan commission supported by 88 bipartisan professionals and consultants. Its report runs over hundreds of pages and is nothing, if not thorough, in its scope and depth of review. The Commission concluded:

"After a thorough review, the Commission found no indication that the Intelligence Community distorted the evidence regarding Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. What the intelligence professionals told you about Saddam Hussein's programs was what they believed. They were simply wrong."

Finally, we closely examined the possibility that intelligence analysts were pressured by policymakers to change their judgments about Iraq's nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs. The analysts who worked Iraqi's weapons issues universally agreed that in no instance did political pressure cause them to skew or alter any of their analytical judgments."
(The Silberman-Robb Commission)

In reviewing the mountain of public evidence that refutes the notion of any "fixing" of intelligence, we should not ignore the obvious. There was no need for supporters of the war to "fix" intelligence in the run up to the war because the prewar belief among the Intelligence Community and policymakers that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction was overwhelming. Both the Intelligence Community and leaders of both political parties believed with certainty that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

In 1998, President Clinton stated: "...there should be no doubt, Saddam's ability to produce and deliver weapons of mass destruction poses a grave threat to the peace of that region and the security of the world." National Security Advisor Sandy Berger remarked: "Year after year, in conflict after conflict, Saddam has proven that he seeks weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, in order to use them." Senator John Kerry stated in 2003: "I think Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction are a threat, and that's why I voted to hold him accountable and to make certain that we disarm him."

In 2004, when asked whether it was a fair statement that the Administration misled the American people, former Weapons Inspector David Kay responded: "I think it's not fair and it

also trivializes what we did find and the problem we face. The problem we face is that before the war not only the U.S. administration and U.S. intelligence, but the French, British, Germans, the U.N. all thought Saddam had weapons of mass destruction.” David Kay noted that “this view of Iraq was held during the Clinton Administration and didn’t change in the Bush Administration. It is not a political “got you” issue.

The British inquiry into prewar intelligence on Iraq rendered findings similar to those found in all the U.S. reports. In his summary of conclusions, Lord Hutton dismissed the allegation that the British intelligence dossier supporting the use of force against Iraq was “sexed-up”: “I consider that the allegation was unfounded as it would have been understood by those who heard the broadcasts to mean that the dossier had been embellished with intelligence known or believed to be false or unreliable, which was not the case.”

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence recently announced its intention to complete its second phase of its investigation into the Bush Administration’s use of prewar intelligence in Iraq. This second phase will focus on the question raised by H. Res. 505, the White House’s presentation to the public of its case for Iraq: that is, how Bush Administration officials, including the White House Iraq Group, handled prewar intelligence, including whether the information was misrepresented in White House statements to the public.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has collected public statements of Bush Administration officials, as well as intelligence data available at the time. The Senators will determine if such public statements were justified by the data.

Finally, Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald reportedly subpoenaed White House Iraq Group documents.

In light of all of these past and ongoing investigations into the Administration’s use of prewar intelligence on Iraq, the House International Relations Committee need not insert itself into an intelligence issue best addressed by the Select Committees on Intelligence.

I urge you to vote with me to report H. RES. 505 adversely.

And now I turn to my friend, the Ranking Democratic Member, Mr. Lantos, for his remarks.